

THE MORNING NEWS

SUNDAY

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS' LARGEST DAILY NEWSPAPER

TODAY IN SPORTS
COWBOYS RALLY IN CAROLINA
IN FINAL MINUTE
ALL-AREA FOOTBALL TEAMS NAMED

SECTION C



DEC. 25, 2005

\$1.00

SPECIAL REPORT: LAG TIME



ZAC LEHR • THE MORNING NEWS

Bartender Jeff King pours a drink at the Hog Haus Brewing Co. in Fayetteville earlier this month. Hog Haus and 412 other alcohol permit holders fall under the watchful eye of one alcohol enforcement agent.

Cop Juggles Diverse Duties

LOCAL ARKANSAS ABC AGENT ONE OF STATE'S BUSIEST

By Don Dailey
 THE MORNING NEWS • DDAILEY@NWAONLINE.NET

It's 10 a.m. and Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Control agent Mike Jones has driven the 35 miles from his office in Rogers to Eureka Springs, the first stop in a 150-mile round trip.

During this day he will travel to far-eastern Carroll County, then to Fayetteville and back to Rogers.

Jones will interview a prospective bar keeper, close down another bar and help a liquor store owner with his shoplifting problems. He'll do some public relations work along the way when he can squeeze it in.

Jones is one of 17 alcohol agents in the state, so he's not alone in having a lot of ground to cover. In fact, his four-county territory is smaller than most of the other agents. What sets him apart is he has far more alcohol-selling outlets to police.

His 413 outlets in Washington, Benton and Carroll counties (Madison County is in his bailiwick but is totally dry) more than double the workload of many of the other agents, and that number grows larger just about every day.

Jones says three agents is about the right number, but avows he isn't complaining.

"I don't try to compare my activity to them (the other agents) nor do I want someone else compared to me," Jones says.

Jones' formidable job description is to keep tabs on those 413 outlets, making sure the owners and employees obey myriad liquor laws in Arkansas.

On this job he must be, in turn, an enforcer, a counselor, a taskmaster and a friend.

He started in law enforcement as a Rogers patrolman in 1973. By 1992 he had worked his way into the chief's job, where he stayed until retiring in 1999. He joined Alcoholic Beverage Control soon thereafter.

Dressed in jeans and a golf shirt, Jones doesn't

SEE DIVERSE DUTIES PAGE 9A

EDITOR'S NOTE

Not everything's kept up with the population boom in Northwest Arkansas. Like the number of folks available to renew your driver's license. Or how many people investigate child abuse claims. Just one agent tracks more than 400 alcohol permits.

How well are you being served by state government?

Starting today and ending Saturday, The Morning News examines the disparities in some vital state government services.

TODAY: ALCOHOL ENFORCEMENT

MONDAY: THE REVENUE OFFICE

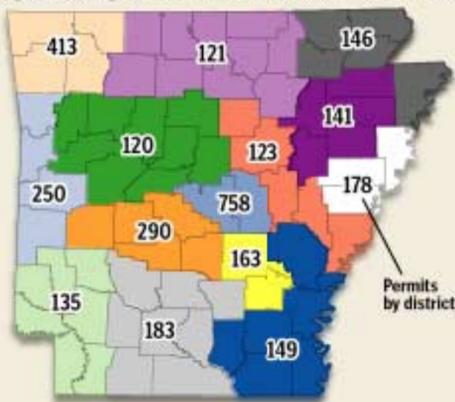
WEB WATCH

LAG TIME

<http://www.nwaonline.net/pages/lagtime>

Tapped Out

Permits have nearly doubled in the past 13 years while only one agent is assigned to enforcement in Northwest Arkansas.



Liquor Permits, 2005*

Permit type	Benton	Washington	Carroll
Private clubs	89	45	3
Liquor stores	0	33	6
Restaurant — drinks	0	87	31
Retail beer	0	171	39
Retail wine	0	2	10
Restaurant — wine	0	62	16
Wholesale beer	0	4	0
Large attendance facility	0	4	0

Liquor Permits, 1992

Permit type	Benton	Washington
Private clubs	33	40
Liquor stores	0	31
Restaurant — drinks	0	0

Funding for ABC enforcement

Year	Funding amount
1980	\$560,549
1990	\$636,971
2000	\$1,347,740
2006 (budgeted)	\$1,496,359

* Total of liquor permits exceeds total of outlets because some outlets have more than one permit.

Source: Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Control Enforcement and Administration divisions

THE MORNING NEWS

HANDOVER PROGRESSES

U.S. Seeks Iraq Control

SHIITES MOVE AHEAD WITH COALITION TALKS

By Ryan Lenz
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING, Iraq — The U.S. Army is hastening efforts to hand over command of military posts to Iraqis after parliamentary elections that many hope will produce a more stable government and set the stage for American soldiers to begin going home.

Seventeen of the 109 former Iraqi bases used by coalition troops since the 2003 invasion have already transferred to Iraqi command, while 30 have been shut down, Army officers say. The Pentagon is pushing for more in the coming months.

"Eventually they're all going to go," said Maj. John Calahan, executive officer of the 101st Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade. "The ultimate plan is that we're

AT A GLANCE

CHANGE SUMMARY

- **The Goal:** Hand over all 109 former Iraqi bases used by U.S. and coalition forces since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The handovers are part of a plan for U.S. forces to return home.
- **The Numbers:** Iraqis have taken over 17 of the bases so far. Thirty have been shut down. U.S. officials said this week two Army brigades would not deploy to Iraq as planned.
- **Potential Problems:** Some Iraqi units have been hamstrung by weapons shortages and some of their soldiers were caught working with insurgents, among other problems.

SOURCE: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

going to have less presence in Iraq until finally we're gone."

Defense analysts caution it

SEE IRAQ PAGE 2A

Daddy Misses First Christmas

SOLDIERS CAN'T AFFORD TRIP HOME

By Teresa S. Newton
 THE MORNING NEWS • TNEWTON@NWAONLINE.NET

SPRINGDALE — Eugene "Poncho" Villarreal almost had a perfect record for Christmas with his family. He always managed to be home for Christmas, even through 12 years in the Marine Corps, service in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Okinawa, plus an 18-month tour in Iraq with the 39th Infantry Brigade of the Arkansas National Guard.

"I've been lucky enough to draw the right straw," Villarreal said in a telephone interview.

Not this year. The 46-year-old soldier is stuck in Fort Dix, N.J., with Bat-

ARKANSAS NATIONAL GUARD FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTERS

- Rogers: 636-3676
- Springdale: 751-4888

tery C, 1st Battalion, 142nd Fires Brigade.

"The training here has required me to stay here. I guess that's part of the job description," Villarreal added.

Charlie Battery members learned they would receive a three-day leave for Christmas after arriving at Fort Dix in November. Some families are flying to New Jersey to visit their soldiers, but news of the leave

SEE NO DADDY PAGE 5A

GETTING STARTED

NOTICE TO OUR READERS

Early Holiday Press Times

The Morning News had early press times in order to allow employees to spend time with family Saturday night. Business offices are closed today and Monday. Subscribers who miss delivery may call the circulation department at 619-2520 or 872-5020 from 6 to 9 a.m. today and Monday.

IN THE NEWS

Newspaper Fund-Raiser Gathers \$20,630

The Community Christmas Card fund-raiser, sponsored by the Morning News, helps Northwest Arkansas students in need by providing money for shoes, clothing, medicine and school supplies. This holiday season, the program raised \$20,630.

FULL LIST OF DONORS, 10H



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➔ DIVERSE DUTIES: State's Alcoholic Beverage Control Officers Do Their Office Work In Borrowed Spaces

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A
look like a typical cop. He has a gun, but keeps it under the seat of his car most of the time.

"You try to build a rapport with these folks ... you're not trying to run them out of business. You're there to help them," he says.

His biggest duty is visiting business owners who are applying for one of the state's many brands of alcohol-sales permits. He's got two scheduled this day.

He interviews Linda Wishon, co-owner of the Central Hotel, where a sign proclaims it the oldest hotel in Eureka Springs, having been built in 1883.

Wishon has already been to an all-day seminar on the state's liquor laws. At one point, with a hint of exasperation in her voice, Wishon says: "Everything's an ABC violation."

Permit applications are Jones' top priority because any delay in processing can be hard on a fledgling business.

Two restaurateurs who have recently been through the permitting process have nothing but good things to say about Jones and the Alcoholic Beverage Control agency.

Joseph Gargano, who got his private club permit this month for Belle Arti Restaurant in Rogers, said Jones was always on time for appointments and available to answer questions.

"He was very nice but firm," Gargano says.

Jim Lavender, owner of The Sanctuary in Bentonville, holds similar sentiments.

"It's amazing they do as much as they do with as little of what they have to do it with."

TERESA BELEW, Arkansas chapter, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, applauding the efforts of Alcoholic Beverage Control agents

"They are extremely efficient as an agency."

Jones' next stop after Eureka Springs is 20 miles east at Billie's Place on the town square in Green Forest. Billie's is being shut down for a week for several violations, a parked motorcycle inside the bar was just one of them.

Jones explains to the bartender the establishment is to remain closed for a week.

There is to be no drinking at all; not even the owner can drink in the place.

"It'll be locked up solid," the bartender promises.

After looping east into the country for cursory inspections of two stores, Jones heads back to Green Forest and pulls into a liquor store drive-through to touch base with another permit holder.

"He'll tell all his employees: 'ABC's in town,'" Jones says as he pulls back onto the highway toward Fayetteville.

ABC agents are supposed to give each outlet in their territory two full inspections a year along with a few cursory walk-throughs. Jones admits it's impossible to do that with 413 outlets.

So what happens is outlets that give Jones little trouble get a lot of slack.

"If they're not creating prob-

lems, I try to let them run their business."

A heavy workload is not the only manifestation of the lack of money for alcohol enforcement. Agents do their office work in borrowed spaces. Rogers provides a rent-free office for Jones in a city administration building. Dispatching is handled by the Arkansas State Police. Overtime is not allowed.

Teresa Belew, the executive director of the Arkansas chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, says her group would like to see more agents on patrol, but she is impressed by what the agency is able to accomplish.

"It's amazing they do as much as they do with as little of what they have to do it with," she says.

Her group is not actively lobbying the Legislature to increase the agency's funding, but it would support such an effort, Belew says.

Jones isn't completely alone in policing alcohol sales and consumption. His boss has made it clear that if he needs help, other agents could step in. Jones says he rarely takes advantage of the offer because the other agents have their own problems, and it's his work to do.

"You feel uncomfortable asking another agent for something like that, but they've never turned me down," he says.

Jones drops in at Crossover Liquor in Fayetteville to deliver some paperwork to the owner, who has been dealing with a troublesome shoplifter. Jones offers to put in a good word for him at the Fayetteville Police Department, which is his next stop to deliver more paperwork.

All the police departments in his territory go out of their way to help him in his duties, especially in policing underage drinking, Jones says.

"Everyone is becoming more active on underage drinking." It's after 3 p.m. and there is one more stop on Jones' itinerary: the second interview for a prospective liquor permit.

He's not going to make it. There are still reports to type up and more paperwork to sort out before the end of the day. He'll get to it tomorrow.

"If you run out of time, you just back yourself up to the next day."

LAG TIME

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ZAC LEHR • THE MORNING NEWS
Customers enjoy drinks at the Hog Haus Brewing Co. in Fayetteville. The area's only ABC agent says he's not complaining, but three agents would be about right to police all the alcohol permit holders in the region.

Man Arrested On Rape Complaint

TIMES RECORD

FORT SMITH — A Fort Smith man was arrested on suspicion of rape after police found him asleep at the alleged victim's residence Saturday morning, authorities said.

Fort Smith Police received a rape complaint from a 44-year-old woman Friday night, said Detective Brandon Davis of the Fort Smith Police Department. The woman told police she went home with Thomas Lee Boyd, 39, of Fort Smith on Friday night. She met him at Chaser's, 3421 Duke Ave., Davis said.

She reported that they had consensual sex but Boyd forced her to do things she did not want to do, Davis said. She called police later Friday to report she was raped.

Fort Smith Police made contact with Boyd on Saturday morning at the woman's residence in the 4400 block of South 19th Street. Police found marijuana in Boyd's possession, said Davis.

Boyd was arrested on suspicion of rape and possession of marijuana.



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